

10.11.16

Greener buses expected to deliver £248m social benefit savings by 2020

A new generation of low emission buses is already saving 55,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per year and saving £8m from health and environmental budgets, a new report has found.

A Green Bus for Every Journey, a report by the **Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership** (LowCVP) which was commissioned by the sustainable travel group **Greener Journeys**, has revealed the positive impacts made by the 3,760 certified Low Carbon Emission Buses (LCEBs) currently operating in towns and cities across Great Britain, which use new technologies to help reduce emissions and air pollution.

With LCEBs making up 40% of all new buses sold last year, the report estimates that if 100% of new buses are carbon efficient by 2020, the annual savings could increase to 432,000 tonnes of GHG emissions – equivalent to removing 92,000 cars from the road – and £248.5m in social benefits.

Claire Haigh, chief executive of Greener Journeys, said: “Tackling transport emissions is one of the most pressing issues facing councils and operators today, and this report clearly shows that investing in clean buses is an integral part of the solution.

“Encouraging more people to switch their car for the bus is crucial to tackling the UK’s emissions problem, and thanks to the new range of clean bus technologies available, this type of behaviour change is now more effective than ever.”

The project has been supported by the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland who have introduced financial incentives and policies to encourage the greater use of LCEBs and, more recently, Low Emission Buses (LEBs) in the industry.

This has helped to reduce the capital and operational costs for operators who wish to choose from a range of technologies including hybrid, electric, hydrogen fuel cell and **biomethane buses**, allowing them to find the most suitable option for their network.

Examples of these technologies in action include Stagecoach, who operate 4,581 biodiesel buses across the UK, cutting the carbon dioxide emissions of their fleet by 25%, and Transport for London, whose current fleet of 31 electric buses will become Europe’s largest electric bus fleet of 73 buses by the end of this year.

Andy Eastlake, managing director of the LowCVP, said: “The UK’s bus sector has made great progress in introducing low emission, efficient technologies over the last decade. This has been in large part due to the support of government and the commitment of industry and other stakeholders to work together and drive change.”

“This support and commitment needs to continue if the sector is to make a necessary contribution to cutting CO2 emissions, as well as to the increasingly urgent task of reducing pollution in our most badly affected towns and cities at least sufficiently to meet 2020 air quality targets.”

The report was launched at yesterday’s e-Bus Summit in London, an event organised to introduce the Horizon 2020 **ELIPTIC (Electrification of Public Transport in Cities)** European project.

Greener transport is seen as a key element of helping towns and cities meet European clean air targets, which are currently being breached in 38 out of 43 UK zones. It also forms part of the UK’s wider commitment to the Paris Agreement to reduce global warming to a maximum of under 2°C starting from 2020.